

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Claims 7-9 are now pending in this application, new claim 9 having been added by the present Amendment. Claims 7 and 8 stand rejected. The rejections set forth in the Office Action are respectfully traversed below.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Houston** (USP 6,696,985) in view of **Klauber** (USP 5,711,624) and further in view of **Weeks** (USP 5,880,685). For the reasons set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

The rejection under § 103 is improper because the **Houston** reference is not an effective prior art reference against the present application.

More specifically, the filing date of the present application is the international filing date of the international application, December 24, 1999. Please see the Notice of Acceptance of Application under 35 U.S.C. § 371 and 37 CFR § 1.494 or § 1.495 mailed January 17, 2003, indicating that “*The filing date of the above-identified application is the international filing date of the international application (Article 11(3) and 35 U.S.C. 363).*”

The effective date of the **Houston** reference, the primary reference applied against the claims, is its filing date, April 24, 2001. Accordingly, the filing date of the present application antedates the effective date of **Houston** as a prior art reference. Therefore, since **Houston** is not prior art with respect to the present application, the rejection under § 103 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Moreover, even if the **Houston** reference were effective prior art, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited prior art.

More specifically, a standard English keyboard includes a middle key array having an extreme right key being an ENTER key as shown in Fig. 1 of **Houston** and in Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5A, 5B, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 of **Klauber**.

The function key array (F1, F2, F3, etc.) is not considered in the present specification and claims of the present invention. Thus, the “middle key array” and the “uppermost key array” mean the “ASDFG” key array and numerical key array (1, 2, 3, etc.), respectively. The DELETE key as shown in Fig. 1 of **Houston** is disposed in this function key array, which is not considered in the present invention.

The present invention only considers the key array groups from the uppermost key array to the lowermost key array concerned with only character keys including a “SPACE” key as shown, for example, in Figs. 4a and 4b of the present application, and does not consider the function key array.

Although in the uppermost key array as shown in Fig. 1 of **Houston** the DELETE key is disposed, the uppermost key array is such a function key array that is not considered in the present invention.

The keyboard as shown in Fig. 1 of **Houston** is a normal note-type PC having an “ESC” key and a “DEL” key in the function key array. In the uppermost key array thereof concerned with only character keys (1, 2, 3, etc.) its extreme right side is still a “BACKSPACE” key. In the

middle key array thereof concerned with only character keys (A, S, D, F, G, etc.), its extreme right side is still an “ENTER” key.

Even in the keyboard of **Klauber** the extreme right side of the uppermost key array concerned with only character keys (1, 2, 3, etc.) is still a “BACKSPACE” key, and the extreme right side of the middle key array concerned with only character keys (A, S, D, F, G, etc.) is still an “ENTER” key.

In the keyboard of the present invention, the extreme right side of the uppermost key array concerned with only character keys (1, 2, 3, etc.) is normally allocated with a “DEL” rather than a “BACKSPACE” key, and the extreme right side of the middle key array concerned with only character keys (A, S, D, F, G, etc.) is normally allocated with a “BACKSPACE” key rather than an “ENTER” key, while the “ENTER” key is normally allocated at either thumb’s home position in a standard 101/104 English or 106/109 Japanese keyboard.

Such a keyboard has never been manufactured, and will favour all people in the world with easy character inputting operation and lower manufacturing and buying cost than a new concept keyboard of **Weeks**.

New Claim

New claim 9 has been added by the present Amendment. New claim 9 further clarifies that the key array groups, from the uppermost key array to the lowermost key array, are concerned with only character keys including a SPACE key.

Unlike the present invention, as noted in the discussion above, the various key array groups of the cited prior art are concerned with function keys. Whereas in contrast, the invention as recited in claim 9 is concerned with the key array groups from the uppermost key array to the lowermost key array concerned only character keys including a SPACE key, as shown, e.g., in Figs. 4a and 4b of the present application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and accompanying remarks, it is submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. A prompt and favorable reconsideration of the rejection and an indication of allowability of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner believes that there are issues remaining to be resolved in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite and complete prosecution of this case.

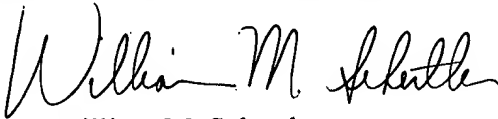
Application No. 09/926,766
Group Art Unit: 2675

Response under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Attorney Docket No.: 011600

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William M. Schertler".

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